

CLASSIFICATION RESTRICTED  
 SECURITY INFORMATION  
 CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
 INFORMATION FROM

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REPORT NO. 

FOREIGN DOCUMENTS OR RADIO BROADCASTS

CD NO. --

COUNTRY Arab States; Inida  
 SUBJECT Political  
 HOW PUBLISHED Daily newspapers; weekly periodical  
 WHERE PUBLISHED Damascus; Beirut; Cairo  
 DATE PUBLISHED 29 Oct 1952-- 9 Jan 1953  
 LANGUAGE Arabic

DATE OF INFORMATION 1952 - 1953

DATE DIST. 4 MAR 1953

NO. OF PAGES 6

SUPPLEMENT TO REPORT NO.

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SOURCE Newspapers and periodical as indicated.

ARABIC PRESS COVERAGE OF MME PANDIT'S TOUR;  
ARABIC PRESS REACTION TO ARAB-ASIAN-AFRICAN BLOC

[Comment: The following represents a cross section of the Arabic press coverage of during December 1952 and January 1953: (1) Mme Pandit's tour of Arab countries and (2) the Arab-Asian-African bloc.

These 2 months saw a great volume of comment in the press of the Arabic world on the Arab-Asian-African bloc, its activities in the UN, and its future conduct in international affairs. The most significant event in this connection was Mme Pandit's good-will tour of Syria, Lebanon, and Egypt during December and January.

Numbers in parentheses refer to appended sources.]

Arabic-Press Coverage of Mme Pandit's Tour

Syria

[Damascus daily newspapers of 4-- 6 January 1953 covered Mme Pandit's visit to the Syrian capital extensively, with front-page photographs and headlines.]

The Damascus daily newspaper al-Yawm of 5 January 1953 carried the highlights of Mme Pandit's press conference, in which she said that her current tour of the Arab capitals was not the result of any past or present plan for an Asian-Arab alliance but rather of her desire to familiarize herself with the Arab world at close range. The article said that although she voiced disappointment with UN actions on behalf of the small nations, such as the UN handling of the Tunisian-Moroccan affair, she nevertheless favored the continuous airing of such problems in the UN. She reiterated, however, that complete understanding and harmony among the members of the Arab-Asian bloc in the UN could solve many of the UN dilemmas.

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Mme Pandit, the article continued, claimed that neutrality was possible for members of the Arab-Asian bloc in regard to the East-West conflict, but that the success of such a policy depended greatly on the ability of each member of the bloc to withstand the pressures applied to it by the two major camps. India, she asserted, was capable of opposing all foreign pressures. In analyzing Arab-Asian bloc cooperation in the international field, Mme Pandit thought that the best way to handle any international problem was to assess it and pass judgment on it independently, and consequently to take a stand on it regardless of the position taken by any other nation or bloc of nations on that particular problem.

Mme Pandit concluded by saying that India felt absolutely no Communist threat from Tibet, Nepal, or any other direction.(1)

In an editorial on 4 January 1953, al-Yawn said that the Syrians welcomed Mme Pandit not only as a most respected guest from a friendly nation but also as a great leader who has surmounted innumerable obstacles in her fight for justice and freedom not only for India but for all oppressed peoples everywhere.

The editorial went on to say that if Mme Pandit's visit to Syria was preparatory to the convening of a conference of the Asian-African-bloc nations, including the Arab States, for the purpose of creating an integral Asian-African organization then it has become quite certain that the great awakening of Asia and Africa will soon assume new dynamic proportions, which will inevitably result in making this new bloc of nations a potent force in world affairs.(2)

The Damascus daily newspaper, al-Bina, of 1 January 1953, reported that reliable Arab political sources construe Mme Pandit's tour of the Arab capitals as a means of assessing at close range, official Arab opinion on the possibility of calling an Asian-Arab-African conference, which would discuss the establishment of an Asian-Arab-African organization, to be formed independently of all existing international bodies. Al-Bina claimed that official Indian sources were optimistic over the future success of such an organization, inasmuch as it would act as a potent third force in international affairs, thereby maintaining a balance of power between the Eastern and Western blocs and thus better guaranteeing world peace.(3)

#### Lebanon

Although the Lebanese press did not give Mme Pandit's visit to Beirut, during the first week of January 1953, as much coverage as the Syrian press did on her visit to Syria, most of Beirut's newspapers, nevertheless, featured the affair prominently, with photographs and biographical sketches of the Indian visitor.

The Beirut daily newspaper, an-Nahar, of 7 January 1953, carried the highlights of Mme Pandit's press conference in Beirut, in which she discussed the Arab-Asian bloc in the UN. The article said that Mme Pandit admitted that, despite the efforts of the bloc on behalf of the Tunisian-Moroccan affair, the UN Assembly had frustrated the aspirations of the North African Arabs. But Mme Pandit promised, the article said, that the issue will again be brought before the UN, until a just solution for it has been found. As to the significance of the Arab-Asian bloc as a third force in the world's balance of power, Madame Pandit asserted that the primary mission of the bloc was to preserve world peace, and that if the bloc is ever to be effective in world affairs, complete harmony among its member nations must be achieved.

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Mme Pandit, the paper said, avoided any comment on whether her tour of Arab capitals had anything to do with a plan to establish an Arab-Asian-African alliance, similar to NATO, and insisted that her tour was aimed at cementing friendly relations between India and the Arab states. Madam Pandit insisted that the Arab-Asian bloc should under no circumstances act as an obstacle to the flow of Western culture to Asia and Africa, but should, on the contrary, work for increased harmony between the Eastern and Western cultures.

Asked about her opinion on the East-West conflict, Mme Pandit insisted, said the article, that the two camps could live in peace with each other; but as to the possibility of a war between the US and the USSR, Mme Pandit thought that only the Soviets and the Americans knew the answer. She maintained that in the event of such a war, it would be in the best interests of the Arab-Asian bloc nations to stay neutral.(4)

The Beirut daily newspaper, al-Hadath, of 9 January 1953, reported that the Political Committee of the Arab League was considering a request by the People's Republic of China for Arab States' recognition of that regime. In this connection, the paper said, India has voiced her great desire for such a recognition.(5)

#### Egypt

On 30 December 1952, al-Misri published the following answers to questions put to Mme Pandit by the paper's correspondent in Cairo:

1. The UN decision on North Africa was not fair. Our voting against the decision expressed our true feelings.
2. The future outlook for the Arab-Asian bloc is good. Through it we have been able to discuss questions of vital interest, and next year we will witness an expansion of our activities. The bloc could become the key to world peace if it is utilized with intelligence and foresight.
3. To increase cooperation within the bloc, we should act in good faith and not spend time in devising measures.
4. Neutrality is possible and necessary. India must remain neutral to rebuild and reorganize the country. Other countries must also remain neutral.
5. The battle currently being waged between the two giants [East-West blocs] does not concern us.
6. India intervened to put an end to the bloodshed in Korea. Wrong is being done there and we want to end this tragedy.
7. We must depend on world public opinion in our fight to spread international justice because liberty concerns all human beings.(6)

#### Egyptian Arabic-Press Comments on Arab-Asian-African Bloc

On 19 December 1952, al-Misri reported that the Political Committee of the Arab League, having lost confidence in the UN for becoming nothing but an instrument of "Western imperialism," will draft resolutions and recommendations for positive action against the "imperialistic" Western bloc in the Asian-African conference. The resolutions will concern regional problems of mutual interest, and will be implemented outside the framework of the UN.

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The paper said that member states of the Asian-African bloc welcomed the idea of such a conference, and it compared the Cairo conference with the New Delhi conference which was held in 1949 to consider the Indonesian problem. That conference passed a resolution to reconvene whenever it was deemed necessary by the member nations to discuss and deal with any imperialistic aggression in the region. Similarly, al-Misri said, the Cairo conference comes as a result of French aggression in North Africa, British and US pressure on the Arabs to conclude peace treaties with Israel, pressure by Western imperialistic powers on West Germany to pay reparations to Israel to strengthen the latter's military potential, and the transformation of the UN, which was the hope of the small nations as a means of justice and peace, into an obedient instrument serving the purposes of international imperialism. (7)

On 20 December 1952, al-Misri reported that among the questions being considered by the Asian-African conference in Cairo is one dealing with transforming the cooperation among the member nations, which is now based on normal diplomatic means, into a regional organization like the Arab League.

The paper stated that the same question was put before the New Delhi conference in 1949. However, it said, certain Asian states thought, at that time, that the idea for a permanent regional organization was premature. (8)

Reporting on the meeting of the Arab-Asian representatives in Cairo, the newspaper Az-Zaman of 24 December 1952, said that Fat/hi Radwan, acting Egyptian Foreign Minister, considered the conference an important historical event because it was the first time that these nations acted outside the UN after the bloc had served merely to organize the joint policies of its member states within the framework of the UN. Radwan stated that the bloc has now become an organized body with many of the attributes of a permanent organization.

Az-Zaman said that its correspondent learned that resolutions to be adopted by the conference included: (a) support of North African questions against French imperialistic policies and (b) a note of protest to France regarding Morocco. (9)

Al-Misri of 7 January 1953 published an interview with Ahmad ash-Shuqayri, Assistant Secretary-General of the Arab League. Ash-Shuqayri had returned to Cairo from New York, where he attended the UN General Assembly as a member of the Syrian delegation. The interview dealt with the activities of the Asian-African bloc and UN action on the Palestinian, Tunisian, and Moroccan questions. The following are the highlights of ash-Shuqayri's statements in the interview:

1. The Asian-African bloc, through its support of Arab questions and questions of freedom everywhere, has been able to command the respect of the UN General Assembly.
2. The Asian-African bloc is the only body in the UN which supports justice, freedom, and noble principles, despite the differences of its ideologies, languages, and backgrounds. The other blocs in the UN represent the imperialistic and vested interests. The reason its member nations possess such noble characteristics and are always sympathetic to any question dealing with freedom and independence is that they themselves have just recently become independent nations.
3. We hope that the UN will eventually follow in the footsteps of the Asian-African bloc in living up to the letter and spirit of the UN Charter, whose goals unfortunately for the weaker nations have not been achieved so far.

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4. The Asian-Arab bloc succeeded in frustrating the conspiracy of the Zionists and Western democracies which called for direct Arab-Israeli peace negotiations without adhering to previous UN resolutions. This caused Israel to withdraw its complaint against Syria and the Arab States, lest it suffers a similar defeat and lest the Arabs expose its true intentions of aggression.

5. The Arab-Asian bloc gave full support to Tunisia and Morocco during the session of the UN General Assembly. The fact that we did not accomplish our desired goals does not mean complete failure, since the UN is only one of the many means of achieving the independence of the peoples of North Africa. The vestiges of imperialism in the UN can be eliminated by continued struggle and patience.(10)

In a lengthy article in its issue of 29 October 1952, the Cairo weekly periodical Akhir Sa'ah commented on serious discussions under way to form an alliance of the Asian and Middle Eastern states in the hope of preventing a third world war. The following are the highlights of the article:

1. Although the Arab-Asian states possess a great potential, they nevertheless are too weak to accomplish such an objective because they are divided among themselves.

2. The Arab-Asian states have recently awakened to the fact that cooperation among themselves could make them strong, feared, and influential in the international balance of power.

3. There is nothing to prevent these states from becoming a strong third force in the world, an effective political unit, and a powerful alliance.

4. At present, these states belong in neither the Western nor the Eastern camp, which have always had and still have imperialistic designs on these nations.

5. It is not in the interest of these states to join either of these camps.

6. Another war would not be in the interest of these states because they themselves will become a battlefield.

7. The only way for the Asian and Middle Eastern states to prevent a war is to form a strong alliance among themselves.

8. To effect this alliance, they must attain a maximum degree of self-sufficiency in various fields.

9. The most important step to be taken by these states to be self-sufficient is to replace their sea trade, which is entirely at the mercy of foreign powers, with land trade by constructing an adequate network of land transportation.

10. Foreign influence in these states is the reason for existing political confusion in the area. This foreign influence owes its existence to the feeling on the part of these states that they cannot depend on themselves. Therefore, an alliance among themselves would greatly contribute toward a feeling of self-reliance and independence.

The article continued by quoting the following views of an unidentified diplomat on this subject:

1. There are only two major opposing powers in the world, the US and the USSR.

2. Each of the two powers has a bloc of nations following it.

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3. There are countries whose position forces them to enter a conflict between the two major blocs but who wish to remain neutral.

4. There are states who can remain neutral and avoid being involved in the war.

This last group includes the Asian and Middle Eastern states who, if united, could stay neutral, the article stated.

"Experience has taught us," the diplomat concluded, "the wars break out when one of the opposing sides thinks that it is stronger than the other, and when there is no strong neutral bloc capable of preventing a war. Therefore, if the Asian and Middle Eastern states unite and form such a powerful third force, they could make the two opposing camps stop and think before embarking upon any war." (11)

#### SOURCES

1. Damascus, al-Yawm, 5 Jan 53
2. Ibid., 4 Jan 53
3. Damascus, al-Bina, 1 Jan 53
4. Beirut, an-Nahar, 7 Jan 53
5. Beirut, al-Hadaf, 9 Jan 53
6. Cairo, al-Misri, 30 Dec 52
7. Ibid., 19 Dec 52
8. Ibid., 20 Dec 52
9. Cairo, az-Zaman, 24 Dec 52
10. al-Misri, 7 Jan 53
11. Cairo, Akhir Sa'ah, 29 Oct 52

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